

For Immediate Release

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### **Governor Donates 100 Acres of Prime Bluegrass to Retired Thoroughbreds**

Louisville, Ky. - The birthplace of champions, the Kentucky Bluegrass, will now

provide a home for retired racehorses as well. In a winner's circle news conference at Churchill Downs in Louisville today, Governor Paul Patton announced that the Commonwealth of Kentucky has donated the use of 100 acres of prime pastureland, valued at more than \$1 million, to the thoroughbred Retirement Foundation (TRF). The land is located at the Blackburn Correctional Complex in Lexington. The facility will provide a home for up to 70 former racehorses whose fate might otherwise be uncertain. Inmates at the complex will participate in a unique vocational training program created by TRF.

"We in Kentucky believe that all horses deserve no less than humane treatment and the right to a meaningful and productive life, even after their racing careers have crossed the finish line," Governor Patton said. "To offer these magnificent animals the opportunity to enjoy the kind of life they deserve after they've retired from racing gives us the opportunity to repay them for the pleasure and excitement they brought to us during their athletic careers.

"Everyone wins with this agreement," Governor Patton added. "We know the horses will be better off and the thoroughbred industry can take comfort knowing there is a facility of this kind in the Bluegrass. We're also convinced the inmates at Blackburn who are

fortunate enough to Participate in the program will benefit immensely,"

Under the supervision of a qualified farm manager, as many as 50 minimum security inmates evaluated before they are admitted to the program, will receive training in horse care and stable management. In turn, the inmates will maintain the facility and provide the day-to-day

care for the equine population.

"No equine rescue program would be complete without a connection to Kentucky, the state synonymous with Thoroughbred horse racing," said TRF Founder and Chairman of the Board Monique S. Koehler. "We are very grateful to Governor Paul Patton and his staff for making us feel so welcome. We understand there is already a waiting list of inmates anxious to enroll in the program.

And equally important is the opportunity for jobs for men who successfully complete the vocational training program at Blackburn. And we know that the horses who find a home at this beautiful facility will figure they've arrived at a patch of paradise."

Blackburn, a 394-bed minimum security prison for men, is located on 360 acres in northwestern Fayette County, near Northridge Farm. The Blackburn facility will raise 50 acres of alfalfa for its equine residents.

"We couldn't have accomplished this expansion into Kentucky without the help and support of our growing Kentucky committee, including Penny Chenery, Drew Couts, Benny Bell Williams, John Stuart, Nina Hahn, John Phillips, Allen Kershaw and Bruce Smith," noted Mrs. Koehler, who established the foundation in 1983. "Penny Chenery, who was blessed to own the great Secretariat and will always be one of our 'champions,' has been a member of our board since its inception, and John Stuart, president of Bluegrass Thoroughbred Services and one of our newest members, has been instrumental in establishing the facility itself.

"We must also thank our partners in racing, including two of the most beautiful racetracks in the country, Churchill Downs and Keeneland," Koehler added. "We are a non-profit organization and look to everyone in racing or anyone who has ever admired the beauty and courage of a racehorse to help to support our endeavors."

The TRF is a national volunteer organization whose mission for more than 16 years has been the rescue, rehabilitation, retraining, adoption and/or retirement of thoroughbred race horses no longer able to compete.

The TRF's retirement farms include the Wallkill (New York) Correctional Facility and the Charles Hickey School for Boys in Maryland. Through these two programs the retired horses enjoy not only first class care and housing but also provide the means for retraining and rehabilitating the men at Wallkill and the boys at Hickey. The TRF has also started construction on a 120 acres of donated land at the Marion County Correctional Facility in Ocala, Florida. More rescued and retired horses are based at farms in Connecticut, Kentucky, Maryland, New Jersey, Virginia, Vermont and Wisconsin. Additionally, the Foundation handles adoptions and last year placed dozens of Thoroughbreds in new homes.

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*For more information or to make a donation, contact the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation at 1050 State Highway 35, Suite 352, Shrewsbury, New Jersey 07702, 732-957-0182/ fax 732-671-7538/ e-mail [trfinc@msn.com](mailto:trfinc@msn.com) or visit our website at [www.trfinc.org](http://www.trfinc.org).*